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A Word to the Colossus

Another step in the same direction is the organization of poetry clubs among the students. College faculties are reluctant to introduce courses in modern poetry, though the Universities of Illinois and California, Baylor University of Texas, and a few other colleges, have made a brave beginning. But the students themselves may organize a poetry club, and discipline each other quite effectively by reading and criticizing their poems at its meetings; keeping up to date with the best current work by following the new publications. In Harvard and the University of Chicago, the members of such clubs have received, to the editor's knowledge, a more rigid training than is obtainable anywhere else in this art, except in a few groups and coteries of poets who have already more or less "arrived."

Of course the only reasonable attitude toward that modern colossus, Education, may be one of avowed skepticism—a sad acceptance of its stony and withering stride over the flowery meads of youth. But if one is to resist this perhaps too facile temptation so far as to argue with the colossus, it would seem that the first point to be insisted on must be that the flowers have individual rights to follow the creative principle within them into whatever shape and color it requires.

H. M.

VISITORS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Now that the war is over, a number of foreign poets are coming to give readings or lectures in this country. However one may deplore our well-known American tendency

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to lionize celebrities from across the sea at the expense of our own, the list promised for this season includes three or four poets of high distinction whom we shall do well to honor, besides a few younger men whose work is still experimental, who may prove interesting on the platform.

Of the former, William Butler Yeats, who was last seen in this country in the winter and spring of 1914, and who will reappear about February first under the auspices of the Pond Bureau, needs no introduction to readers of POETRY, and should require none before any audience, beyond the mere recognition of his pre-eminence as the most distinguished Irishman, and the foremost poet (in English), of our time. The dinner given to Mr. Yeats by POETRY on the evening of March first, 1914, has now passed into literary history, partly because of the generous cachet accorded by the guest of honor to Vachel Lindsay, who at that time was little known. Mr. Lindsay acknowledged the Irish poet's praise by reading, for the first time, his then unpublished poem, *The Congo*. Mr. Yeats' very suggestive speech, printed in our issue of April, 1914, has been an inspiration to all students and lovers of poetry; and it will be a privilege to hear him again.

Maurice Maeterlinck is another name too distinguished to require further emphasis. Maeterlinck's career may be one of the tragedies of literary history—the fact that his best work was done in youth, and that life seems to have blurred his genius instead of developing it. The theatricalism of *Monna Vanna*, and even the somewhat over-

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studied but delicate naïveté of *The Bluebird*, weakening to mushiness in *The Betrothal*, have been a serious disappointment to those who saluted the young playwright, thirty years or more ago, as a creative poetic genius of the first order. However, the softened fibre of his later work can not deprive his fame of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and those other early plays, which reveal the very inmost soul of brooding and life-bewildered youth. Mr. Maeterlinck's tour, which begins in January with the operatic première of *The Bluebird* in New York, will be his first acquaintance with this country.

An Englishman of the highest distinction among present-day poets and novelists is D. H. Lawrence, who wrote last May to the editor of his intention to give a few lectures in America during the coming season. Whether the intention has become a certainty or not we are uninformed, but one can think of no one in the younger generation of British poets who would receive a more enthusiastic welcome from our literary artists. Since January, 1914, it has been our privilege to print many of Mr. Lawrence's finest poems. and his novels have the same searching and profound sincerity.

Lord Dunsany, Irish poet, playwright and teller of tales, has been ushered into this country by a good deal of "little-theatre" and magazine popularity. His plays, though written in prose, are essentially poetic in spirit and essence. Cloyd Head feels that while the new dramatic movement does not derive from Dunsany as it does from Synge and

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Yeats, the young Irishman's plays are the most important thing now going on in it; that they have the unassailable validity of a fairy-tale—that effect of being far-off in space but immediate in time; and that, moreover, their dramaturgy is skilful to the point of magic. Lord Dunsany has written also some reflectively fantastic stories, a few being suggested by the war, in which he served as a British officer.

Siegfried Sassoon is a friend and soldier-comrade of Robert Nichols, the English soldier-poet who was in these parts last year. Eunice Tietjens, reviewing *Counter-attack* last July, said: "Sassoon, more than any other poet of war, has gone straight to the root of war—his book is a cringe of pain."

John Drinkwater is another English poet whom the papers credit with an intention of visiting the United States this season, the occasion being the American presentation of his play, *Abraham Lincoln*, which has had a popular success in England. POETRY has printed a few of Mr. Drinkwater's poems (Dec., 1915, Sept., 1916, and Nov., 1917) and will soon review his play.

For a word about the Japanese poet, Yone Noguchi, we yield to Mrs. Tietjens, who knew him personally in Japan.

H. M.

YONE NOGUCHI

Years ago, when a group of gay young blades were making San Francisco a literary centre with the now traditional *Lark*; when Gelett Burgess, Bruce Porter, *et al*, were